A SHORT
BIOGRAPHY
OF
IMAM JAFFER AS-SADIQ (A.S)

BY
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CONTENTS

Page

Preface..... 4

Chapter 1: Imam Jaffer Bin Muhammad Al-Sadiq(A.S): Childhood and Early Manhood,..... 6

Chapter 2: Imam Jaffer Bin Muhammad Al-Sadiq(A.S): Life after Martyrdom of his Father..... 13

Chapter 3: Major Historic Events during the Times of Imam Jaffer Sadiq (A.S.)..... 31

Chapter 4: Imam Jaffer Sadiq's Non-Political Stand …….. 42

Chapter 5: Imam Jaffer Bin Muhammad Al-Sadiq(A.S.): Character and Personality..... 56

Chapter 6: Imam Jaffer Bin Muhammad (A.S): His Family..... 63

Chapter 7: Imam Jaffer Bin Muhammad (A.S): His Sayings..... 66

Chapter 8: Some Miracles of Imam Jaffer Sadiq (A.S.)..... 71

Chapter 9: Imam Jaffer Bin Muhammad (A.S.): His Martyrdom..... 75

Questions: …… 79

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Preface:

Finally, with the Grace of Allah, I have completed this short biography of our Sixth Imam, Imam Jaffer Sadiq (A.S.) for those readers who need to have a brief overview of the life of this divinely appointed Imam.

There is so much information on the life of our Sixth Imam that in the initial stages I had no clue as to where to start and where to end this daunting endeavor that I had agreed to undertake on behalf of the Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania. The more I thought of this project, the more discouraged I felt, until when I learnt that there were quiet a few people who had read the short biographies that I had written on the other Imams and who were inquiring from the Bilal Muslim Mission for explanations as to why I had not written on the life of our Sixth, Tenth, Eleventh and the Twelfth Imams. This inquiry encouraged me, once more, to pull myself together and apply my energies towards this unfinished task. The result of this effort is the short sketch depicting the highlights of the life of our Sixth Imam, Hazrat Jaffer Sadiq (A.S).

Every time I went through this work when it was in the draft form, I felt that it was not worth printing as it did not encompass even the most basics about the life of this illustrious personality. I ended up making massive alterations. Finally, I came to the conclusion that if I were to follow my instincts, this work would never be completed. We therefore now h^ye this brief work for my readers. My prayers to my Creator is that may He forgive me for the deficiencies that may have remained unveiled in this book.

I take this opportunity to thank all those who have in one way or another helped me in my efforts to undertake and complete this task. My special sentiments are for Fidahussein Abdullah Hameer, the Publisher, who tolerated my tardiness and constantly reminded me of my obligations to complete this work.

Mohamed Raza Mohamed Husein Dungersi,
February 11, 1999 Shawwal24, 1419
New York-U.S. A

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CHAPTER 1
IMAM JAFFER BIN MUHAMMAD AL-SADIQ(A.S.)
CHILDHOOD AND EARLY MANHOOD

INTRODUCTION:

Imam Jafter Bin Muhammad (A.S.) is the Sixth Imam form the progeny of Prophet Muhammad (S. A.W.W.). He is known more by his title (Lakab) [fc] AL-SADIQ\ Several explanations have been given as to why he has been singled out for this title despite the fact that all the Imams from the progeny of the Prophet were truthful-AL SADIQ.

Muhammad Khazri in *tesAT-TASHRM i JL ISLAM!* says: "Hazrat Abu Abdullah Jaffer Sadiq (A.S) came of the Sayyeds of the Holy Household. He won the title of Sadiq because of his unchallengeable truthfulness." Batras Bustani inhis *DAERATAK MAAREFVol* VI. reaffirms this view.

Another explanations is, there was a need to distinguish him form others who had a similar name and who had made false claims to be the Imam of the time. By calling him AL-SADIQ, people would differentiate him from the false ones.

A third explanation is that Allah, the Almighty, Himself chose this title for him. The Prophet (S. A. W. W.) therefore foretold the birth of this Imam and gave him this title.

The most important thing to note is that like the Prophet (S.A.W.W.) who was acknowledged to be truthful i AL-SADIQ) even by his avowed enemies, The Quraish of Mecca, similarly Imam Jaffer Sadiq's truthfulness has been accepted at all times even by his enemies.

As for the name Jaffei; by. Arabic lexicon, it simpK means a stream. But according to some traditions. Jaffer is a unique stream

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in paradise. In view of the fact that Imam Jaffer (A.S) was to become a fountain head of knowledge for all and sundry; he was given this name by his father, the Fifth Imam.

The Sixth Imam is also known by many other titles C1LQAB') that include FAADHIL (the excellent one), TAHIR (the pure one), SAB1R (the patient one), QAEEM (the steadfast one) and MUSADDIQ (the ratifier).

Another unique thing about Imam Jaffer Sadiq (A.S) is, the Shia sect of Islam is named after him. Thus when people talk of the 'madhab' of Abu Hanifa, of Ahmed Ibne Hanbal, of Malik bin Anas, of Imam Shafi, they talk of the madhab of Ahlul Bayt as madhab Jafferi.

HIS PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS:

His father was Imam Muhammad Baqir (A.S.).

His mother was Fatima (popular by the name of Umm Farwa). She was a woman of many merits. Imam Sadiq (A.S.) had high regards for her, so much so that he used to quote her as source of "hadith' from the Fifth Imam. One such hadith is recorded by Kulayni in *USULAL-KAFI:*

Imam Sadiq (A.S.) reports that his father told Umm Farwa: "O Umm Farwa, I pray to Allah for the sinners among the Shias day and night, a thousand times, for we Imams endure the misfortunes that happen in the light of what we know of the coming reward, whereas they suffer without such knowledge."

This does not come, as a surprise knowing the fact that Umm Farwa's father was Qasim, the son of Muhammad Bin Abu baqr. Qasim was a very pious person and a devout student of Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S). He was regarded amongst the seven top most jurists of Medina during his times.

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Qasim's father was Muhammad whose mother was Asma Binti Umays and whose father was AbuBaqr, the first Caliph from Saquifa. Asma Binti Umays had been previously married to Jaffer Bin Abu Talib who was martyred at Mutta. She was then married to Abu Baqr after whose death she married Imam Ali (A.S.). Imam Ali loved Muhammad Bin Abu Baqr whom he addressed as his own son.

Qasim married his cousin, Asma, the daughter of Abdulrehman Bin Abu Baqr. From this marriage was born UmmFarwa.

HIS BIRTH:

Imam Jaffer Sadiq (A.S.) was born on Friday 17th of Rabiul Ula 83 AH (AD 702) in Medina. Remember: this is also the birth anniversary of our Prophet (S. A.W.W). Imam Ali BinHusain (A.S), his paternal grandfather, was still alive at his birth. As a matter of fact, he lived with his grandfather for twelve years when the latter passed away on 25th Muharram95A.H.

It is reported that when Imam Sadiq (A.S) was still in his mother's womb, he used to communicate with her. According to Allama Majlisi, when Imam Sadiq (A.S.) was bom, he bowed down and supported himself on the ground. Then he looked at the sky and read the "Kalema" and called out the names of all Imams before him. His father read" Adhan" in his right ear and Ikamaa' in his left ear. Like the previous five Imams who came before him, he was bom clean and circumcised. Between his shoulders was the seal of"Imamat".

EARLY CHILDHOOD:

Imam Sadiq (A.S) had the opportunity of spending 35 years of his life with his father, Imam Muhammad Baqir (A.S.). He was an active participant of the school that his father was running both

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in the mosque of the Prophet (S.A.W. W) and in his own house in Medina. Imam Baqir (A.S) would, time and again, involve Imam Sadiq (A.S) to conduct classes so that the students could appreciate the young Imam's knowledge and skills as an educator, and their future Imam.

Instances are quoted by Sheikh Mufid in his *AL-IRSHAD* when Imam Baqir (A.S) introduced Imam Sadiq (A.S.) as his successor:

- A man by the name of Abu Al-Sabbah Al Kinani reports that once when he and others were in the presence of Imam Mohammed Baqir (A.S), the Imam looked towards his son, Imam Sadiq (A.S) and said, "Do you see that man? He is one of those of whom the Mighty and High has said; [4] We wish to grant a favor to those who have been humiliated in the land and we will make them Imams and inheritors. (xxvii:5)'"

- Jabir Bin Yazid Al-Jufi, who was a famous companion of the Fifth and the Sixth Imams reports that once Imam Baqir (A.S) was asked about the one who would take over form him as the Imam of the time. He tapped Imam Sadiq (A.S) with his hand and said, "By Allah, this man from the family of Muhammad (S.A.W.W.) will take charge."

LIFE WITH HIS FATHER:

Not only was Imam Sadiq (A.S) his father's right-hand person in conducting classes in his father's madressa, he was also his father's companion on his journey abroad. Imam Sadiq (A.S) reports one such journey to Damascus.

Hasham, son of Abdul Malik, son of Marwan, the Ummayyad Caliph, summoned Imam Baqir (A.S.) to Damascus with the sole aim of rebuking and then imprisoning him for no other reason than that Hassham was afraid that the Imam would

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overthrow Mm. Details about this journey and the Imam's miracles in the court of Hasham have been described in the unit covering the life of Imam Baqir (A.S.). At this juncture, we need to note that Imam Jaffer Sadiq (A.S), too, was present and his father took this opportunity to introduce his son to the rest of the world. Imam Sadiq (A.S) was the main witness in the reporting of the miracles that his father showed, with the permission and help from Allah, the Almighty.

THE EFFECT OF IMAM BAQIR'S TEACHING ON IMAM SADIQ (A.S)

Admittedly, the divinely appointed Imam gets his knowledge form Allah, the Almighty and does not learn anything form any human being. Nonetheless, an Imam does learn from his father who is an Imam preceding him. By this token Imam Sadiq learnt a lot of things from his grandfather, Ali Bin Husain (A.S) and his father, Muhammad Bin Ali (A.S.).

First and foremost, the institution of learning in Medina that Imam Sadiq (A.S.) developed so successfully was initially started by Imam Zainul Abidin (A.S) and Imam Muhammad Baqir (A.S). These two Imams not only laid the foundation of a unique center of learning, but also defined the educational course that this institute would take. Also, they produced a comprehensive and concrete course-work, which was so extensive, so diverse, and so challenging that it came to attract students from all walks of life from such distant places as Iraq, Egypt and Persia.

Imam Jaffer Sadiq (A.S), as a young boy, grew-up in this institute as a scholar and teacher. On the passing away of his father, he took over and was in full command as dean and manager of this institute. He then developed this educational structure into an equivalent of a modern time university, with the curriculum including Science of the Quran, 'Tafseer' (Exegis), Tiqh' (Jurisprudence), 'Seerah' (Biography of the Prophet) Philosophy,

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'Irfan' (Gnostics), Grammar, Literature, and Chemistry to mention but a few branches of knowledge.

PASSING AWAY OF IMAM BAQIR (A.S.): IMAM SADIQ (A.S) AS IMAM OF HIS TIMES.

Kulayni writes in his *AL KAW* that Imam Sadiq (A.S) says that when his father. Imam Baqir (A.S), was about to pass away from this world, he said, "Jaffer, I command you to treat my followers well." Imam Sadiq replied, " May 1 be at your ransom[1] By Allah 1 will teach them knowledge so well that they will become self-sufficient."

Imam Baqir then asked for witnesses to be brought. Four witnessess from the clan of Qurash were called. The Imam then dictated his testimony, naming Imam Jafer Sadiq (A.S) as his trustee and successor. He then let the witnesses depart.

Imam Jaffer Sadiq (A.S) inquired from his father as to why he had called the witnesses. Imam Baqir replied that he did so, so as to silence those who could claim later on that Imam Baqir (A.S) had left no successor.

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CHAPTER 2

IMAM JAFFER SADIQ (A.S) LIFE AFTER MARTYDOM OF HIS FATHER:

INTRODUCTION:

Imam Jaffer Sadiq (A.S) took over as the Imam of the time from his father in AH 114 when Hisham Bin Abdul Malik was the Caliph. Unlike most of his predecessors, who had ruled for veiy short times and therefore did not have enough time to obstruct the progress of Islamic Education propagated by Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq (A.S.), Hisham ruled for 22 years. He became a real threat to Islam, especially in the later years of his life. Imam Sadiq (A.S) therefore had to do two things. First and foremost, he had to protect all the educational progress that his grandfather, his father and he himself had achieved up to this point in time. Second, he had to play down his role as the champion of Islamic learning and wait for another opportunity to arise, and then to continue his work from where he had left it. In this chapter, we shall see how he succeeded in accomplishing these two goals.

HIS RESPONSIBILITIES AS THE IMAM OFTHE TIME:

Remember that when Imam Baqir (A.S) was about to depart form this world, he had asked Imam Sadiq (A.S.) to be fully responsible for the "ummah'. Imam Sadiq (A. S) had promised to do just that, but to do so through the process of education and learning. This is the key to understand the Imam's reaction to various situations that arose during twenty four years of his Imamat.

Imam (A.S.) had two options to choose from: Either involve himself in political activities and bring down the oppressive rulership of the Ummayades, or seek reform through the process of

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education. At that time, the political option appeared to be the better of the two choices. but if we look at the events now; we can realize that the second option was. indeed, the best option, and we can appreciate Imam Sadiq's wisdom and deep foresight in choosing this option to bring about necessary changes in the society.

Before we examine Imam Sadiq's approach, let us look at the reasons which made people at that time, think that the political choice was the only choice available.

The Ummayade rulers were cruel carefree and completely incapable of ruling effectively. They did not care for Islam or the Muslims. To meet their own ever-using expenses, the rulers overburdened their subjects with taxation and exhausted resources, with the result that there were dissatisfaction and uprising throughout the empire. By putting down these upn sings, the Ummayad rulers only made themselves more unpopular and, not only did they weaken themselves, but also paved way for further uprisings. Syed Ameer Ali described this situation thus: "The flower of the nation had perished either in the civil wars or under the suspicious policy of a jealous court. The blind confidence reposed by the last sovereign in his ministers had thrown the government in the hands of incomplete and self-seeking functionaries whose incapacity and misrule alienated the people. Hisham was little fitted by character or disposition to cope with difficulties, which now beset the empire. The frequent change of governors led to disastrous consequences."

(A SHORT HISTORY OF THE SARACEN AS):

Then, it was clear that time was ripe for those with leadership abilities and some recognition in Muslim society to organize themselves to topple the I mmayade dynasty. Imam Jaffer Sadiq (A.S), in the eyes of his contempora-ries, was the ideal person for this task. However, Imam (A.S) had a different opinion. When

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proposals came to him to do so, he flatly refused to get himself involved politically. How right the Imam was, we shall see in the course of this chapter.

Whereas Imam Jaffer Sadiq (A.S) refused to seize this opportunity, there were others who were tempted to so. They went after it and the result was disaster and destruction for them. This subject w ill be discussed elaborately in Chapter 3 and 4. At this juncture, we shall describe briefly the merits of Imam Jaffer Sadiq's (A.S) approach and its impact on the welfare of humanity in general and Muslims in particular.

THE STRATEGY OF REFORMING THE CORRITT SOCIETY THROUGH THE PROCESS OF EDI CATION AND LEARNING:

Zaid, Imam Muhammad Baqirs step-brother, and later on his son, Yahya, decided to take the political choice. Similarly, later on, Imam Hasan's grandson Abdullah Mahaz and his two sons Muhammad (popularly known as 'Nafse Zakiah" - the pure soul) and Ibrahim, too, decided to get involved politically to counteract the Ummayad oppression. The outcome of their approach will be discussed in chapter 3 and 4.

The grandchildren of Abbas, the Prophet's uncle, by the name of Abu Abbas (later on came to be known as Saffah "The blood-shedder") and Abu Jaffer (later on came to be known as Mansoor —""the victorious"), too, chose to agitate against the Ummayad rulers. The outcome of their struggle will be assessed in chapter 3 and 4. The activity of these agitators was mostly in Iraq, Persia and to some extent in the Peninsula of Arabia.

Similar agitations were also brewing in Syria, Africa, Spain, and in those parts of Central Asia and Europe where the Ummayad rulership extended.

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Hisham Bin Abdul Malik Bin Merwan had considered these threats more serious than Imam Sadiq's education program in Medina. He therefore put to full use his energies and resources to suppress these agitators so as to save his throne. Imam Jaffer Sadiq (A.S) took this opportunity to carry out his mission that had been put to a temporary halt by Hisham.

IMAM SADIQ'S "REVOLUTION' THROUGH EDUCATION

After a short interruption, Imam Jaffer Sadiq (A.S) resumed his teaching program, knowing that it was now safe to do so. Whereas Imam Zainul Abeedin (A.S) and Imam Baqir (A.S) had fully established the Center of Learning.

Imam Sadiq (AS) went ahead; he helped it to attain a status similar to a modern university.

DEVELGPM ENT OF THE CENTER OF LEARN ING TO HAVE THE STATUS OF A MODERN-TYPE UNIVERSITY

The most outstanding characteristics of a university are:-

- It is a place of advanced learning
- It is an institute that disseminates both pure and applied knowledge on a wide range of disciplines.
- The teachers of this institute are highly talented with proven experience in their respective fields of learning.
- It has a very rich source of information to facilitate independent research for those students wishing to specialize in a branch of knowledge that interests them most.
- The teaching method employed in this institute has basically two features: Lectures given to a full class and tutorials (or seminars) where the classes are smaller in size and there is an informal interaction between the tutor and the students.

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A university that develops on these principles builds ?ts reputation, which is reflected through the high quality of students that it produces, and the volume of information that it generates.

The public both national and international - then gives recognition to such an institution. The ultimate result is seekers of knowledge throughout the civilized **world** Hock around such an institution.

Imam Jaffer Sadiq's Institution had all these qualities as revealed by the curriculum as well as the methodology that had been adopted by Imam (A.S).

THE CURRICULUM OF THE INSTITUTE:

The core of the curriculum was to teach correct Islamic knowledge as contained in the Holy Quran and explained by the Prophet (S.A.W.W) and the divinely appointed Imams from the progeny of the Prophet - the AHLUL BAYT. The focus was on *TAFSEER* or that science of the Quran that dealt, in detail, with such issues as the surface and the underlying meaning of the various verses. the circumstances under which each verse was revealed and the correct interpretation of the commands and lessons of the Quran.

FIQH-(Islamic jurisprudence or law) was another subject that was given special attention. Theoretic as well as practical problems were addressed and their solutions worked out during the FIQH session.

The science *of 'HADITH'* had also an important position in the classes of Imam Sadiq (A.S). A very important concept was explained: the concept of the Golden Chain of Narration. The essence of this concept was any tradition that an Imam from Ahlul Bayt mentions has a continues chain of narrators (all being Imams) that links it to the Prophet (S.A.W.W.) whose source is the Angle

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Gabriel whose source is Allah, the Almighty Himself. In an age when false “hadith” were being fabricated and associated with the Prophet (S.A.W.W), Imam (A.S) taught his students a golden yardstick to use in differentiating a true hadith from a false one. He said any hadith that contradicts any verse of the Quran is a false one and has no merit. Moreover, to counter the false hadith. Imam (A.S) introduced the correct but hitherto unknown hadith in thousands on various subjects pertaining to the basics of faith, ethics, and all other matters of life and death. He encouraged his students not only to memorize these hadiths. but record them in writing so as to avert the problem of misrepresentation in the future. He left the task of classification these hadith to his graduates.

Imam also taught *ISLAMIC*: *HISTORY with* the focus on the biography of the Prophet (S.A.W.W) - the "SEERAI-T. He provided a complete and correct picture of the life of the Prophet to counteract the falsified versions that was the work of those false scholars paid to do so by the Ummayad rulers.

Apart from these broad ‘core’ subjects students with special aptitudes and interests were encouraged to develop then skills at such specialized disciplines as the Arabic Language and Literature, Philosophy, Logic and Physical Science like Chemistry and Biology.

Capable students were encouraged to carry out their research under the tutelage of the Imam himself, and to write books for future usage. These students were also encouraged to become teachers who could then go out far and wide in the world to preach the true message of Islam. There were five students whom the Imam trusted most and singled them out to be the future teachers in the event that when the Imam was gone and the institute closed by the rulers; these students were Band Bin Muawiyah, Abu Basii; Layth Bin Murad, Zararah Bin Ain, and Muhammad bin Muslim. Imam (A.S) considered them as "trustees of Allah" for their

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administration of the permissible (halal) and the forbidden (haram) in religion.

As a result of this encouragement, several thousand books were written by the the students of the Institute. Out of these, 400 books were on fundamentals of faith (FURUU). After the passing away of the Imam (A.S) and when the University was closed down by the Abbaside ruler Mansoor, the Shia came to depend on these books heavily Later on, scholars prepared digests and summaries of these books for the use of the followers of the "Madhab of Ahlulbayt." Four of these books became the 'core' books and continue to be so. These books are:

1. AL-KAFI - authored by -Kulaini
2. AL-TAHDHIB - authored by Tusi
3. AL-ISTIBSAR - authored by Tusi
4. MAN LA YAHDARAH AL-FAQIH authored by Sudduk.

TEACHING METODS OF THE INSTITUTE:

The main 'auditorium' - if you thus want to call the classroom of Imam Sadiq (A.S) - was the mosque of the Prophet (S.A.W.W.) in Medina. This is where the Imam (A.S) would conduct his classes, in the morning, in the afternoon and at night. Breaks were provided only at the times of daily prayers. Formal lectures were given by the Imam (A..S.) followed by brief periods of question - answer sessions.

Special tutorials were given in the mosque at times of break, or in the house of the Imam (A.S). Fazl Bin Otnar \\lio learnt from the Imam (A.S.) Biology and several related disciplines as Zoology and Botany did so at dawn after the Fajr prayers. In he later years of his life, the Imam (A.S.) was helped in running these classes by his son, Imam Musa Kadhim (A.S). Imam also trained his wife Hamida Barbaria to deal with issues related with women 1 here came a time when Imam (A.S) would refer women to Hamida to have her answer their questions.

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Imam also encouraged some of his extraordinary students to work as his representatives both in Medina and elsewhere. The names of the students were mentioned before.

1)THE EFFECT OF IMAM'S 'REVOLUTION' THRUGH LEARNING

Diverse and very useful knowledge relating to this world and the hereafter became available to mankind in general and Muslims in particular. According to Al Mufeed and Tibrisi, as many as 4000 students graduated from Imam Sadiq's institute of learning in Medina. The diversity of the knowledge that Imam helped to generate is reflected by 4 main factors, (i) The volume of written information that was produced by the Institute; (ii) The variety of discipline that were covered in these written document s; (iii) The intellectual levels of the students who attended and graduated from the institute and iv. The geographical areas, which were represented in this endeavor to create and disseminate knowledge.

i). Volume of Information produced by the Institute:

Books were written in thousands by the graduates of the Institute of which 400 were on USOOL alone. These books existed for many centuries and were used as sources of information and basis of authority by many later Muslim scholars. Details on these documents will be provided when we examine the famous graduates of the Institute. Suffice it to mention here that Jabbir tbne Hayyan, who was a prominent student of Imam Sadiq (A.S), collected 500 treatises of the teachings of Imam Sadiq (A.S). Ibne Hajar e Makki summarizes the effect of the flood of information flowing from the University of Imam Sadiq (A.S) in these word: "..so many issues of learning have been transmitted from Hazrat Jaffer Bin Muhammad, that they are known from city to city and hamlet to hamlet. Great leaders of learning like Yahyabin Sadeed, Ibne Jaree'h, Malik, Sufyan, Abu Hanifa..have given narration from him" (SAWAEQA ALMUHRIKA).

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ii). Variety of subjects covered by the curriculum:

Professor of Literature in the University of Cairo, Muhammad SadiqNashaata, summarizes this aspect so well that his words are reproduced verbatim; the professor says. "The house of Hazrat Jaffer Bin Muhammed (A.S) has a status of a complete university where great scholars of traditions, exegesis, philosophy and polemics gathered together. Sometimes two thousand scholars and sometimes four thousand scholars at a time attended the lectures. His pupils have collected his teaching in the form of books which have acquired the status of an Encyclopedia." (quoted form *Status of Imam Sadiq (A.S),* Peermohamed Trust Publication).

ii). The intellectual level of students who attended these Institute:

Four thousand graduates from this institute have been recorded by their names in the annals of history. We shall reproduce here under a few of these students' names and narrate briefly their contribution to learning since this will give an indication as to the quality of teaching they went through under the tutelage of Imam Sadiq (A.S).

NOMAN BIN THABIT (Popularly known as Imam Abu Hanifa). He was a full time student of Imam (A.S) at Medina for two years. Apart from that, he attended Imam's classes in Kufa for a short time and would consult the Imam's guidance from time to time. He states that he would have been ruined if he had not been the student of Imam Sadiq (A.S) for those two years. This is confirmed by no other person than Muhadise Dehlavi in his *TOHFA-E-ITHNASHERIAH.*

- **IMAM MALIK BIN ANAS:**

He, too, was the student of Imam Sadiq (A.S). The author of *TAHZEEB* quotes Imam Malik to have complemented Imam Sadiq (A.S) in these words:" In point of learning, a better man has not been seen by eyes or heard by ears or conceived by imagination."

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- **SHOABA BIN HAJJAJ:**

He is regarded as prominent transmitter of traditions which appear in the SEHAH. Imam Shafi complements him saying that if it had not been for SHOABA there would have been no knowledge of traditions in Iraq. Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal regards him as the embodiment of the Muslim Ummah.

- **HAFS BIN GHIYAS**

Because of his knowledge, he rose to the position of the Qazi (Chief Justice) in Baghdad and Kufa. He could quote three to four thousand traditions that he had heard and committed to memory from his student days in the Institute of Imam Sadiq (A.S).

- **IBRAHIM BIN MIIHAMMAD MADAM**

He was an author of several books from which Imam Shafai copied several narrations since the latter was Ibrahim's student.

- **IBRAHIM BIN SAAD ZOHRI**

He later became a teacher of Ahmad Bin Hanbal who started his own Madhab, the followers of which came be known as Hanbalis.

- **SAEED BIN MUSLIMAH**

He became the teacher of Imam Shafai, the founder of the Shafai school of thought.

- **ABDUL MALEK BIN AAYUN**

He was an expert in astronomy.

- **ISHAQ BIN AMMAR**

He specialized in the Biography of the Prophet and his work is regarded as highly reliable by the scholars of Biography.

- **MUHAMMAD BIN MUSLIM**

He obtained sixteen thousand traditions from Imam Sadiq (A.S). There were times when Imam Abu Hanifa would send his

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students to seek solutions of problems from Muhammad, such a great authority he was!

- **JABIRBIN HAYYAN AL AZADI**

In the West he is known a GEBER. Imam Jafer Sadiq (A.S) taught him Chemistry - the discipline in which he is believed to have written at least 100 books of which 22 are still existing. His published works include: *KITAB AL REHMAN* (Book of Mercy) *KITAB AL TAJM1* (Book of concentration), *AL ZILAKAL SHARK1* (Book of Eastern Mercury, Book of the Kingdom, Book of Balances).

His books on Chemistry have been translated into several European languages, and have influenced tremendously the development of modem chemistry. The *Encyclopedia Speculum Naturale* described Jabir in these words "The influence of GABER is very pronounced." Max Meyerhof has this to say about Jabir: "His influence may be traced throughout the whole historic course of European alchemy and Chemistry." Later chemicalscientists such as Al Tugharia and Abu Al-Qasim Al Iraqi who flourished during the 12th and 13th centuries respectively regarded Jabir *as~* "Master"

Whereas the scholars of the world regard Jabir as their "Master", he regards Imam Sadiq (A.S) as the best teacher that he has ever had! He associated the cause of his success to Imam Sadiq (A.S) referring to him as "My spiritual guide and master, Jafer Ibne Muhanimaad."

iv). The geographic areas from where the students came.

The four thousand registered students and the unknown thousand of the non-registered students did not all belong to **Medina** alone. The fame of the Institute of Imam Sadiq (A.S) had spread so far and wide that students of different inclinations, tastes and interests from all over the known world began to converge in Medina. Eager learners came from Koofa, Basra, Wasit (In Iraq);

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from Egypt, Persia, Bert>er Africa and Spain. All the major Arabian tribes sent their learners to Imam Sadiq (A. S). It is reported that members from the tribes oi Bani Asad, Makharah lay, Saleem Qhattan, Gaffar, Khazaah, Khashaam, Makhozoom, Bani Zabah and the Quraysh were all represented in the Institute in Medina.

In his book the *History of Arabs* Ameer Ali described this aspect of the Institute in these words: ".. the chief leader of this movement of learning was Hazrat Imam Sadiq (A.S).. He had an extensive vision, deep insight and perfect mastery of every branch of knowledge .. His assembly of learning and knowledge was not only attended by those who later became Imams of religious school but also by great personalities from all parts of the world, who graduated there to avail of his teachings."

2). THE INFLUENCE OF THIS LEARNING WAS WIDE-SPREAD OWING TO THE EXTENSION SERVICES OF THE INSTITUTION.

During his visit to KUFA, BAGHDAD and KERB ALA, Imam (A.S) took upon himself to run educational courses at formal ancTinformal levels at his place of abode. Eager learners from those towns and the surrounding areas would attend Imam's classes and acquire knowledge in those fields, which were of interest to them.

Over and above that, Imam (A.S) would encourage some of his students to act as his representatives in those places like Qum where the Imam did not have the opportunity to visit. Through this system of transmission of information through such students as MUHAMMAD BIN MUSLIM AND ABU BASIR AL ASADI, Imam's influence extended to such areas as Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and Persia.

Through this means, the process of learning was dispersed and its benefits reaped not only by Muslims and believers alone,

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but also by humanity at large. Through the process of dialogue and discussion several non-believers were converted into firm believers.

It is interesting to note that Caliph Saffah and then Mansoor arranged for the Imam to undertake these foreign visits with the intention of harming him. However, the Imam (A.S) turned these visits into teaching experiences and conveyed the true message of Islam to those distant places.

3). MARTYRDOM OF IMAM HUSAIN(A.S.) AS PART OF THE CURRICULUM OF THE INSTITUTE

The importance of Martyrdom of ImanvHusain (A.S) was explained and Muslims were trained to appreciate and uphold the principles and ideals for which Imam Husain (A.S) gave his life. In his *AZA-AL-HUSAINPAR TARIKH TABSERA,* Maulana Syed Ali Naqi narrates several methods which the Imam used to achieve those goals. Some of the methods are as follows:

i). He encouraged formal and frequent gathering to remember the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S) and the other martyrs of Kerbala. This was particularly so in the month of Muharram when he would hold such gatherings in his own home and invite such famous poets as Abu Ammara Nashd to recite elegies and eulogies on the martyrs of Kerbala. Abu Amrnar himself reports that on one occasion the Imam (A.S) asked him to recite a number of such elegies up to the time when the weeping and wailing would be heard from the house of the Imam (A.S).

Zaid Shilam reports that once when he was in Kufa in presence of Imam Sadiq (A.S), a poet by the name of Jafar Bin Iffan came to see the Imam. After a brief conversation, the Imam requested Bin Iffan to recite elegies on Imam Husain (A.S). Bin Iffan complied. The effect of these elegies were such that the Imam

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(A.S) began to weep and then he thanked Bin Iffan saying, "Do not think that only this gathering here is listening to your elegies? As a matter of fact, Allah's angles are present here and are mourning with us. May Allah bless you for your elegies. Allah will reward you with Paradise for composing these verses".

The Imam once asked Abdullah Bin Fazl: "Do you ever organize gatherings and recall events that are based on the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A.S)?"

Bin Fazl replied that, indeed, he did.

Imam observed "I very much approve of such Majlises"

According to Maulana Ali Naqi lexically 'MAJLIS' means any session but the Imam (A.S.) used it as proper noun to mean exclusively those gatherings for the remembrance of the martyrs of Kerbala.

ii). He stressed on the importance of visiting the grave-site of Imam Husain in Kerbala. He is the only Imam after Imam^Zainul Abideen (A.S) - to have had an opportunity of visiting the grave-site of Imam Husain (A.S) in Kerbala. As a matter of fact, he was able to visit Kerbala on more than one occasion. His first chance came when Saffah, the first Caliph from the House of Abbass invited the Imam to Kufa. The Imam (A.S) broke his journey at Quria Ghazaria where he took a bath in the River Euphrates (The "FOORAT") and then walked to the gravesite of Imam Husain (A.S) and recited the salutation which is famous by the name "ZIYARAT WARTTH" which now the believers recite at least every week on Thursday night.

After this occasion, every time the Imam (A.S) was called to Iraq, he would make a point to visit the grave site of Imam Husain (A.S).

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He also encouraged people to visit the shrine of Imam Husain (A. S), by stressing the great importance of such visits. To give you an idea of this fact, we shall narrate one of the traditions from Imam Sadiq (A.S) regarding the importance of visiting the shrines of the martyrs of Kerbala.

Kulaini and Sayyid Bin Taoos quote Muawiya Bin Wahhab, one of the most famous companions of Imam Sadiq (A.S) saying that once he visited Imam (A.S) and found him busy praying. When the Imam finished his prayers, he prostrated in a "sajda" and requested Allah to reward handsomely and forgives the sins of those who left their homes and visited the shrine of Imam Husain (A.S). When the Imam finished his prayers, Bin Wahhab expressed his surprise that there was so much reward here and hereafter for those who ventured to visit the shrine of Imam Husain (A.S). Elaborating on the importance of visiting the grave-site of Imam Husain{A.S), Imam Sadiq said," Oh the son of Wahhab, don't you wishto be thos£ considered by Allah as the beneficiaries of the supplication of the Prophet (SAW), of Ali Ibne Abi Talib, of Fatima (A.S) and we, the Imams from the of the Prophet (S.W. A.W.W)? Don't you wish to be amongst those who shake hands with angles? Don't you to be considered as one of those who shall corne on the Day of Judgement free from all sins? Don't you want to be one of those who shall be shaking hands with the Prophet (S.A.W.W) on the Day of Judgement?"

By asking these questions, the Imam (A.S) was stressing the importance of visiting the grave-site of the martyrs of Kerballa generally, and that of Imam Husain (A.S) in particular.

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CHAPTER 3

MAJOR HISTORIC EVENTS DURING THE TIMES OF IMAM JAFFER SADIQ (A.S)

INTRODUCTION:

Imam Jafer Sadiq (A.S) was born in the reign of Abdul Malik Bin Marwan and was martyred in the times of Mansoor Dawanaqi. He therefore witnessed the reign of ten rulers from the Ummayades and two from the Abbasides. Imam Sadiq (A.S) took over as the Imam of his times from his father during the reign of Hisham Bin Abdul Malik.

To fully comprehend the problems and the prospects that lay in the way of Imam (A.S) in his obligations to serve mankind in general and the Muslims in particular, it is important to examine the political, economic and social climates during the kingship of these rulers all of whom were usurpers and blood thirsty. The study of these monarch is also important in tracing the causes of the decline and the fall of the House of Ummayades and rise of the House of Abbasides.

The Last four Caliphs from the Ummayades

Hisham Bin Abdul Malik (104AH - 123AH)

We have briefly studied the rulership of Hisham when we were dealing with the biography of Imam Muhammad Baqir (A.S). Suffice it to say that, during the later years of his 19 years of reign, Hisham became extremely oppressive towards [mam Jaffer Sadiq (A.S) so much so that imam had to assume a lower profile in conducting his educational efforts.

Having ruled for 19 years. Hi sham died at the age of 53 at his estate in Rusafa on the banks of River Euphrates In his lifetime. Hisham had made an agreement with his brother that the latter's

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son. Walid II would succeed Hishrun Hisham could not change this agreement, though he hated it, and was therefore succeeded by Walid 11 in 123 AH.

Walid Bin Yezid Bin Abdul-Malk Bin (I23-I26AH):

Robert Payne, the author of The History of Islam recognizes Walid as the "corrupt emperor". Syed Amir AH portrays him in these words: "….He waited impatiently to the death of his uncle. Immediately on receiving the news, he hurried to Damascus, and began his reign by driving out Hisham's family from the palace. even the funeral rites of the deceased monarch were not allowed to be performed without indecent interference …. Suyuti described him as "Libertine, a wine-drinker, and a breaker of divine commands Masoodii in his 'Muruju Zahab' relates an incident when Walid opened the Quran and read those verses where Allah reminds faithfuls to submit to His will. Walid was enraged. He tore the Quran into pieces with his arrow shoots and composed these verses:

Do you dare to threaten me in my proud rebellion?
I am Walid -the most rebellious of Men!
O, Quran, when you appear at the Judgment Court,
Tell Allah who it was who tore you to shreds.

He organized drinking parties on the roof of the House of Allah - the KAB A. An illustration of his faithlessness is given by Amir AH who say, "Walid DL once indulged in a prank which greatly angered the religious people in the capital. He sent to the Mosque, enveloped in his cloak, a beautiful lad of the harem with whom he had been entertaining himself, to preside at the Friday service in his stead."

He continued his oppression against the household of the Prophet (S.A.W.W.S.). Yahya, Zaid's son, was killed mercilessly by the orders of Walid. Yahya's head was cut from the body and

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sent to Walid. Yahya's death, according to Ammer Ali, "accelerated the downfall of the Ommeryades."

His immoral behavior and his cruelty towards his own kith and kin made his own people turn against him. In 126 A.H., Yezid son of Walid son of Abdul Malik, rose against Walid H. Walid was killed, ironically holding on to the Qur' an that he had insulted earlier on, and his body paraded in the city of Damascus, where hitherto he had ruled as the Caliph of the Believers! His sons were put in prison and later murdered by the orders of Ibrahim, Yezid's (EH) brother.

Yazid (III) Bin Walid Bin Yazid Bin Abdul Malik Bin Merwan (126 A.H.127 A.H.):

Having overthrown and killed his cousin, Yazid El set to establish himself as the Caliph of the Muslims. But he ruled only for five months and died mysteriously in 127 AH. He was succeeded by his brother Ibrahim. None but the people of Damascus only recognized him and his rulership survived only for two months. Merwan bin Mohammad, the grandson of Merwan bin Hakam, the founder of the Merwani dynasty, rose against Ibrahim. Ameer Ali describes the events of that time thus: "Demascus was now in a terrible state of anarchy and confusion, and the arrival of Merwan was welcomed by the respectable citizenry. He was immediately proclaimed Caliph..."

Merwan (II) Bin Muhammad (127 - 132 AH,)

He was the grandson of the founder of the Hakamite dynasty, Merwan Bin Hakam. Before being Caliph, he was governor of Armenia and had shown remarkable skills at suppressing rebellions from the north. His enormous powers of endurance earned him the nickname of al-Himar, the ass, not as an insult but as an acknowledgement of his great physical strength. His life was simple and spent mostly with his soldiers. Though quite advanced in age - he was over sixty - he still possessed the physical powers

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found rarely in soldiers of his age. However, as Amir Ali rightly observes, much more than mere soldiets qualities were required to save the Ommeyad power from destruction. His obstinacy, his bad temper, and above all, his hatred for the Yemenites paved his downfall.

No sooner had he taken over the Caliphate, then they were uprisings in Hems and Palestine. In Iraq, the Kharijis were rebelling against the government. Rather than focus on fixing the damages done by his predecessors, Merwan had to spend his time and energy putting down rebellions at, Hems, Palestine, Iraq and Hijaz, thereby not only arousing more hatred in the hearts of people against the Ummayed regime, but also weakening his abilities to deal with "the enemies of the State" in the garb of the Abbasides.

In the following chapter, we shall look in some details those people or a group of people who constituted "the enemies of the state" and the steps that they took to benefit out of the state of anarchy that had discended upon the I Smmayde rulership at the time when Merwan al Himar had come to power.

It was at this time that in Khurasan there was an open war declared in the name of "AHLUl -BAY'P to replace the Ummayade regime. This outcry was raised by a man by the name of Abu Muslim, who was none other than a military agent of Ibrahim Bin Muhammad Bin Ali Bin Ibne Abbas. We shall learn more about their personalities in chapter 4.

The main motto of Abu Muslim was that the Ummayades were oppressors and usurpers. The right to rule belonged to "Ahlul Bayt,'" the immediate family of the Prophet Not only were the Ummayades usurpers, they were heinous as shown by the way they spilled the blood of the grandchildren of the Prophet. They cited the examples of the martyrs of Kerbala and more recent murders of Zaid Bin AH and his son Yahya. People were urged to rise and

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march to overthrow the usurpers. To win the confidence of the people, the dress code used by Abu Muslim was that used to mourn the martyrs - black. The majority of the supporters of Abut Muslim were those who were the sympathizers of the children and grandchildren of Imam Ali (A.S); all along they were made to believe that these grandchildren of the Prophet (S.A.W.W) would be made the rulers to replace the Ummaydes. However, what many people did not realize at that time was that there was a hidden motive behind this revolution, namely that the name of Ahlul Bayt was being used by the family ol Abbas and then conspirators who were planning 10 take over the Caliphate for themselves when the opportune moment arrived I his agenda was not know even to such a prominent member of this movement as Abu Salnia about whom we shall learnt if the next chapter As a matter of fact it was during these crucial moments that oath of allegiance was taken in the name of Muhammad NafseZakkiyah in Medina.

By AH 132, Khorsan had fallen totalK in the hands *M* Abu Muslim, and his force under trie command of Hassan bin Kahtaba, now marched into Iraq and captured Kufa.

In response to these losses, Merwan arrested Ibrahmi who was in constant touch with Abu Muslim, and got him killed. Ibrahim's brother Abu Abass (saffah) and Abu Jaffer (Mansoor) escaped to Kufa. They stayed there till AH 1*32* when Abu Abbas was declared the Caliph of the Musiinv. This forced Merwan to march against the advancing force of the Abbasides, A fierce battle was fought at Zab where Marwan was defeated and he fled Soon the entire M us! ini Empire fell into the hands of the Abbasides Merwan was caught and killed while he was still on the run. With Merwan ended the 90 years of the tyrannical rule of the House of Ummayades and began the rulership of the tyrannical house of Abbas -the Abbasides.

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THE FIRST TWO CALIPHS FROM THE HOUSE OF ABBAS

Abu Abbas (132 AH -136 AH)

We have noted that Abu Abbas became the Caliph even before the end of the Ommayad dynast under the last caliphate of Merwan Bin Muhammad. With the murder of Merwan, the Ummayade Dynasty ended except in Spam where a grandson of Hi sham, by the name of Abdul Rehman, continued to rule independent from the Abbaside Caliphs in Baghdad.

Abu Abbas was known for his wild temper and vengeance. He showed no mercy to his enemies. He spared the life of none who belonged to the House of Ummayades. He shed so much blood that he came to be known as the "Shedder of Blood" He showed no mercy even to the dead. Graves of the Ummayade Caliphs were desecrated; whatever that was left of the dead was dug out and burnt into ashes. He is supposed to have an executioner standing next to him, ready to be ordered to execute an unsuspecting victim. Among his renowned poetry are these lines:

Our sword are dripping with blood.....
…….....
And the hands of our enemies are broken to fragments, Like Smashed ostrich eggs.

He shifted his capital from Damascus (Syria) to Hashimyah in Northern Iraq. He appointed his own relatives and close friends to the major government jobs and named his brother, Abu Jaffer, as his successor. Having ruled for four years he died from small pox. Fearing that his dead body would meet the same fate as the one he meted out to his enemies, his last instructions were that his grave site be kept secret.

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Abu Jaffer (Al-Mansoor) (136 - 158 AH):

Abu Jaffer succeeded his brother Abu Abbass (Saffah) as the Caliph in 136AH He ruled for 22 years, and was truly the founder of the House of Abbas, the Bam Abbas or the Abbasides.

He was shrewd and unscrupulous He trusted none and would spare the life of no one whom he suspected to be a threat to his rulership. We noticed how he arranged the killing of his loyal supporters such as Abu Muslim. He got murdered his own Uncle Abdullah Bin Abbas who was one of the persons who fought hard against the Ummayades. Not trusting the people of Kufa, he shifted his capital from Hashimia, to a new capital that he built himself at what is now known as of Baghdad. It is said that he modeled Baghdad on the description of the Paradise as described in the Quran. According to the historian Tabari, it cost the Treasury 4,800,033 Dirhams to build [Baghdad - a colossal sum of money, in those days.

Though Abu Jaffer named himself "Mansoor" - the victorious, historians know him as Mansoor "Dawanaki" -Mansoor "the father of the farthings"! This is because he was very stingy when it came to spend money. Tabari described one such incident in his *Tarikh - AI Rasul wal Mulak.* The governor of Barasama had finished his tenure n office but Viansoor did not want to reward him anything so he used an excuse that the governor had misappropriated funds while in office. The governor in his defense argued and swore in the name of Allah that he had on him only one dirham which he has kept to pay his passage to his home Mansoor responded: "I do not doubt that you are idling the truth. Give us our dirham." Tabari concludes, "Al Mansoor only treated him harshly in order not to give him anything." However, when it came to his own relatives, Mansoor was very generous. According to Tabari, in one day Mansoor distributed to a group of his family ten million dirhams, and gave one of his uncles alone one million dinars. Tabari says "we do not know of any Caliph after him who conferred that on a single person." Some of ms cousins such as

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Suleman. Isa. Saleh and Ismail (sons of Mi bin Abdullah Bin Abbas) were each given a salary of a million dinar. By the same token he treated himself with regal indulgence. Tabari again tell us that Mansur had extend into a written contract with his first wife, Umm Musa, that he would not have in his "haram any other women in her lifetime. When Umm Musa died, Mansoor spent that night in company of one hundred virgins!.

Shamlessly, he praised those rulers from the Ummayade who had committed acts of crime against Muslims. For example, he spoke highly of Hayaj Bin Yusuf, who was responsible for spilling the blood of thousands of Muslims. Tabari tells us that when one of Mansoor's courtiers complained saying,"... I did not think that I would like ;o see the day when al-Haiiaj would be discussed in your house…", Monsoor replied, " Why do you disapprove of (hat^ He was a man whom people trusted with power, and he served them well. I would be happy, by God, if 1 could find a man like Hajjaj so that 1 could hand over my responsibilities to him and settle him in one of the two Harems (Mecca and Medina)..."

You can now imagine how hard it must have been for Imam Jaffer Sadiq (AS) to have served the Muslim community[7] during the reign of this tyrant. As a matter of fact, Mansoor was after Imam (A.S) and had him called to Iraq several times with the main object of killing him. It was Allah's protection exclusively that protected the Imam (A.S)

A man by the name of Muhammed Bin Abdullah Iskandari reports: "'One day 1 went to meet Mansoor and found him worried and sad. 1 asked for the reason. Mansoor told me that whereas he had succeeded in killing hundreds of the members from the progeny of the Prophet, he still had not been able to kill the head of the house, meaning Imam Jaffer Sadiq (A.S)". Muhammad inquired as to why would Mansoor want to kill the imam who was the best person of the times. Mansoor acknowledged Imam's greatness and innocence. Nevertheless, he regarded Imam (A.S) as his

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main cause of worry. Mansoor then sent for the Imam and instructed his executioner to await for instructions to behead the Imam (A.S). However, when the Imam (A.S) came to Mansoor, the latter's entire attitude changed. He showed excessive respect towards the Imam (A.S) and expressed apologies for disturbing the Imam (A.S) at this tune of the night. He asked the Imam if he needed any thing from him. The Imam (A.S) replied that the best things that Mansoor could do for him w[7]as to leave him alone. This Mansoor promised to do and he let the Imam (A.S) go home.

Then narrator says that after the Imam's departure, he asked Mansoor as to why he had spared the Imam's life though he had called the Imam (A.S) for no other reason than to kill him.

Mansoor explained that with the Imam, appeared 4 huge serpent, which warned Mansoor that should he do any harm to the Imam (A.S), the serpent would devour him. Fearing for his own life, Mansoor let the Imam go unharmed.

Mansoor made several such efforts to harm the Imam (A.S) but he failed. Finally, he got the Imam (A.S) poisoned in Medina through the Governor of Medina. Imam (A.S) passed away in 148 A.H at the age of 65 years. As soon as the news of the martyrdom of Imams Sadiq (A.S) reached Baghdad, Mansoor wrote to his governor in Medina to find out those whom the Imam named as his trustees and behead them immediately Imam Jaffer Sadiq (A.S) had foreseen that a situation like this would arise; he therefore took a precautionary step to save his successor Imam Musa Kadhim (A.S) by naming Mansoor and the governor of Medina as two of his five trustees. The other three trustees being Hamida (Imam's wife), Abdullah Aftah and Imam Masa Kadhim (A.S). Therefore Mansoor's instructions could not be implemented.

After Imam Jaffer Sadiq (A.S) Mansoor ruled yet for another ten years. He died a station or two from Macca on 6th Zilhajj 158 AH, on his way to perfom pilgrimage of the ^House of Allah." He

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was succeeded by his son Mahdi about whom we shall learn when we discuss the Biography of Imam Musa Kadhim (A.S).

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CHAPTER 4

MAJOR HISTORIC EVENTS DURING THE LIFE-TIME OF IMAM JAFFER BIN MUHAMMAD-ALSADIQ (A.S) AN D HIS NON-POLITICAL STAND

INTRODUCTION:

Imam Jaffer Sadiq (A.S) was that Imam from the progeny of the Prophet who saw the rulership of the Ummayades and the Abbasides at their peak and at the lowest point of their power. Whereas he lived through the entire rulership of Hi sham that stretched for nineteen long years, he also saw the rise of Mansoor Dawanaqi from being a fugitive to being one of the strongest rulers of the world of that time.

Several" opportunities" became available at this time to the Imam (A.S). In this chapter we shall closely look at these opportunities and examine why the Imam (A.S) chose some and rejected others.

OPPORTUNITIES:

Despite the lengthy and somewhat "successful" rulership of Hisham, it was clear that the Umrnayed rein was coming to an end. This is because the Ummayade rulers had proved to be totally ineffective and unfit to rule. People were rising against the cruel government through out the Empire. There were uprisings in Khurasan, Central Asia, Southern Arabia, Spain and North Africa. These revolts were crushed but at a high price. Not only did they drain the Treasury, but also made the suffering mass more determined to fight for their freedom against the tyrant Ummayades. On the other hand, the Ummayade rulers imposed heavy taxes on people so as to fill the state's ever-empty treasury. A situation was being created for people to be more and more pushed towards a point of overthrowing the Government.

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This constant "war" between the government and the people created an opportunity. A strong person who could organize the people and provide them with leadership stood a good chance of replacing the Ummayade rulership. Both Imam Muhammad Baqir (A.S) and Imam Jaffer Sadiq (A.S) saw this opportunity but refused to go after it for reasons which we shall see in the course of this chapter. Besides these two Imams, there were others, too, who saw this plump opportunity of going after the seat of power. At this juncture we shall briefly relate about those others who went to exploit this opportunity and the fate which befell them in pursuit of this option.

1). Zaid, son of AH bin Husain (A.S.):

Zaid, the son of Imam Zainul Abideen (A.S), was one such a person who thought it was time for him to rise against the Ummayades and their repressive rule. Zaid was a pious person who spent his nights in prayers and his days fasting. He went to the court of Hisham to advise him to end cruelty towards Muslims. Hisham treated him with insults, abusing Imam Baqir (A.S) and the members of the Prophet's family in general. Zaid could not bear these insults. He went to Kufa and raised an army to overthrow Hisham.

Hisham sent his army under the commandership of Yusuf BinUmar Saqafi. In 122 AH after fighting bravely. Zaid was martyred. His uprising failed. He was buried secretly but Hisham found his burial place and had the body of Zaid dug from the grave and placed on the cross. Later on, his body was burnt and ashes thrown in the River Euphrates.

Zaid's son, Yahya, rose again in 125 AH but he too, was defeated, killed and his body treated with humiliation by the orders of Walid II, the successor of Hisham.

2). Muhammad Bin Abdullah Bin Hassan Musannah Bin Hassan (A.S):

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On the death of Hisham in A.H 125, his brother Walid II, took over as the ruler of the Muslim Empire. Amir Ali described his as "...utterly oblivious of the ordinary rules of morality and addicted to drinking..." People were convinced that it was time the rulership be returned to the members of the House of the Prophet the Ahlul Bait. Imam Jaffer Sadiq (A.S) refused to get involved in the underground movement that was getting ready to overthrow the Ummayade regime. Other members of the Bani Hashim decided to do otherwise; amongst them was Abdullah Mahaz and his children. They visited the secret meetings held in Medina where the Bani Abbasi leaders, Suffah and Mansoor. too were present - all planning to overthrow the Ummayade. At one such meeting, Muhammad, the son of Abdullah Mahz was nominated to be the Caliph to replace the Ummayade ruler.

Muhammad was a very virtuous person, so much so that he was known as Nafs-U-Zakiyar the "pu^e Soul". As he was considered the head of the house of Imanj Hassan (A.S) people nominated him as their Caliph. Saffah and Mansoor were not happy about this but for the time being they kept quiet, waiting for the right time to come for them to act, and put forward their owtt claim to the throne.

3). Muhammad Bin Al Bin Abdullah Bin Abbas (The Abbasides) and his sons:

Muhammad was the grandson of the famous Ibne Abbas, the, companion and cousin of the Prophet (S. A.W.W). He saw the opportunity of seizing the Caliphate for himself using the name of the "Ahlul-BaiT as away to gain support from the masses. The followers of Ahlul- Bait were fooled into believing that Muhammad was fighting to return the rightful Imams to power. Little did they suspect that Muhammad had his own hidden agenda of reserving the Caliphate for himself and his children. He started his campaign against the Ummayade administration, gaining support day by day.

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However, before he could succeed in his mission, he died in AH 125. At his death bed he appointed his sons Ibrahim, Abdullah Abu Abbas (later on surnamed As-Saffah), and Abdullah Abu Jaffer (latter surnamed Al-Mansoor) as his successors, one after the other. They continued with their mission with care and caution using the watch-word "the rights of the Ahlul Bait-People of the House."

The effort of the Abbaside propaganda was helped by the unfit ruler who succeeded Hisham: Walid II

Walid II.

Walid II, in the words of Amir Ali, was of "a fickle temperament and debased nature which often broke forth in cruel deeds." The cruelty with which he got Yahya, the son of Zaid killed and his body hung on the cross, made him very unpopular. According to Amil Ali: 'Thefateof Yahya created a great sensation in Khorasan and accelerated the downfall of the Ommeyads... and when Abu Muslim stood forth as the 'Avengor of the House' they (the people) flocked to his standard dressed in black, which hereforth became the Abbaside color..."

Besides these three personalities from among Bani Hashim who had their eyes on the Caliphate, there were two other personalities who could not have a direct claim to the Caliphate but who could play the part of "King-Makers" because of their military strength and skills. These two personalities were Abu Muslim and Abu Salma.

Abu Muslim:

He was native of Isphahan (Iran) and joined the services of Muhammad Bin Ali Bin Ibne Abas. Because of his organizational skills, he was incharge of raising the support for the ABBASIDE movement in Khorasan. He was very successful at his job which became easier at the death of Hisham and the coming to power of Walid II, as his already been noted.

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The martyrdom of Zaid's son, Yahya, offered Abu Muslim yet another golden opportunity. Young Yahya's martyrdom aroused a lot of sympathy for him and anger for the Ummayades. Abu Muslim seized this opportunity and at that very moment came out in the open to oppose the Ummayade's floundering administration, capitalizing on the sympathy of the people.

Nasra, the governor of Khorasan was busy putting down other uprisings in the West, and in Yemen. His garrisons were therefore weak and defenseless. Soon he lost to Abu Muslim who was now in complete control of Merv-(Iran).

Abu Salma Hafs Bin Sulaiman al Kahllal:

Bakayr Bin Maham was a sympathizer of the Ahlul Bayt and was part of the Abbaside propaganda machinery in Kufa. On his death, he appointed his son-in law Abu Salma Hafs to take his place. According to TABARI, Abu Salma then traveled to Khorasan where he was welcomed and given a portion of ᶜKhums' collected from the Shias of Khorasan. He was in constant touch with Ibrahim Bin Al Abbas who was in Syria. His designation was "the vizier of the descendants of the Prophet."

Although he was in service of Ibrahim, when the opportunity arose for the seizure of power from Ummayades, he turned to Imam Jaffer Sadiq (A.S). He sent a note inviting Imam 10 present himself to be crowned "as the Caliph" Imam (A.S) didn't even open the note; he burnt it and told the messenger to tell Abu Salma what he saw.

Abu Salma had no choice but to support Saffah's claim to the Caliphate.

Why did Imam Sadiq (A.S) turn down the Opportunity to accept the Caliphate?

Whereas others saw only the political opportunity in the form of a ripe fruit ready to be picked from the tree, Imam Sadiq A.S) saw yet another opportunity: the educational one which was better than the political one in more than one way. He decided to go for

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the educational opportunity. To fully understand Imam's choice, we have to consider the consequences of those who went for the political opportunity.

Consequences:

- **Zaid Bin Ali Bin Husain.**

He was betrayed by the people of Iraq. Whereas over 15,000 people pledged to support him, when the actual time for support came only a few came to help him. He was brutally killed and his body was exposed to untold humiliation. His son Yahya, was hunted down like a fugitive until when he, too, was callously killed. The fate of Zaid and his son Yahya made Imam Sadiq (A.S.) weep for several days. If only Zaid had heeded Imam Sadiq's advice of not seeking the end of the Ummayade oppression through uprising.

- **Muhammad Bin Abdullah Bin Hasan Mussanah Bin Hasan (A.S.):**

Imam Sadiq's refusal to raise a claim on the Caliphate, paved way for Muhammad Bin Hasan to do that instead. In the earlier stage of the revolution against the Ummayades, Saffah and Mansoor were amongst those who recognized his claim and paid their allegiance to him. However, they did so only out of convenience. They were interested in acquiring the Caliphate for themselves but were waiting for the right opportunity to do so. This opportunity came in 132 AH when Saffah, with the help of Abu Muslim, declared himself the Caliph in Kufa. Mohammed Bin Abdullah was left out in the cold!

When Mansoor succeeded his brother as Caliph in 136 AH, he took one more step against the progeny of the Prophet (S.A.W.W.). Remembering the earlier days of the revolution and the commitment that he had made to Muhammad Bin Abdullah, he thought it unsafe to let Muhammed live. Before Mansoor could do anything to Mm, Muhammad and his younger brother Ibrahim

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escaped to Medina and Basra respectively. Mansoor sent his army first to Medina. Muhammad fought courageously but he was killed. Mansoor then sent his soldiers to fight Ibrahim, There, too, Monsoor ended up the uprising by getting Ibrahim killed. He then sent Ibrahim's head to his father who had been imprisoned in Kufa by Mansoor. This was in the year 145 AH.

Muhammad's son, Abdullah, had earlier gone to the governor of Sindh, Omar Bin Hafs Al-Sufri, to seek his support for his father. When the news of the martyrdom of Muhammad reached the governor of Sindh, he sent Abdullah to a nearby king who had agreed to take the young man under his protection. However, Mansoor sent his forces that finally killed *Abdullah.* This was in the year 152AH.

Mansoor was not yet satisfied. In the words of Amir Ali: "Mansoor now vented his rage on Medina and Basra. Many notables in Basra who had joined Ibrahim were caught and executed. Their houses were rased to the ground; their dategroves cut down. In Medina, the properties of Bani Hasan and Bani Husain were confiscated... He even threatened with death the venerable Imam Jafifer as Sadiq for asking for the release of his properties. He threw into prison Imam Abu Hanifa and had Imam Malik cruelly flogged..."

- **Sons of Muhammad Bin AH Bin Abdullah Bin Abbas:**

Muhammad himself died before the revolution.

His eldest son, Ibrahim, was living in Palestine. Marwan Al-Hammar, the last Caliph from the Ummayades, had him killed oti the grounds that the latter was in contact with Abu Muslim, the rebel of Khorasan.

Abu Abbas, who became the first Caliph from th^House of Abbas, and his brother Mansoor, had to adopt some very cruel

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measures to retrain their rulership. Abu Abbas shed so much blood that he became known as SAFFAH, meaning "the Shedder of Blood". Abu Jaffer exceeded even Saffah in his cruelties.

Despite the fact that Imam Sadiq (A.S) had kept himself totally away from the movement to over throw the Ummayades and therefore had no interest in the caliphate, nonetheless, Saffah had suspicions that the Imam (A.S) could be a political rival. He therefore summoned the Imam (A.S.) to Kufa, but having no evidence at all to prove Imam's involvement in matters of statecraft, he let the Imam (A.S) go free,

- **Abu Jaffer:**

The younger brother of Saffah, and who later assumed the mane "Mansoor" (the victorious one), succeeded his brother in 136 AH. So as to keep the Caliphate safe from his rivals, he went after them all.

As we have seen before, he had Muhammad Nafs-U-Zakiyya killed and his entire family destroyed. Feanng that other members from the progeny of Imam Hasan (A,S) would raise their heads against his administration to avenge the murder of Nafs-U-Zakiyya, Mansoor declared a war on each member of Imam Hasan's progeny. Thousand of innocent members from the progeny of the Prophet were thus killed mercilessly.

Tabari; the famous Sunni historian, describes one such incident that gives us an impression of the extent of cruelty Mansoor had to practice to remain the Caliph. Tabari reports that when Mansoor was about to leave for Mecca where he had expected to retire, he called his niece and sister-in-law (Mehdi's wife) Rytha (who also was Saffah daughter), and gave her a key to the treasury. Then he sought a promise from her that she would open theireasury only in presence of her husband the new Caliph, after Mansoor's death.

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Accordingly, after Mansoor's death, Rytha, accompanied by her husband, Mehdi, the new Caliph, went into this room of secrecy. To their shock, the Caliph and the Queen witnessed "a chamber of horrors." In the long chamber of treasury was a collection of the corpses of the great grandchildren of Hazrat Abu Talib, and in their ears were tags on which were written their genealogies. Mehdi ordered that the corpses be buried, and the treasury be pulled down.

- **Abu Salma:**

  His position was "the Vizier of the Ahlul Bayt."
  He invited Imam Sadiq (A. S) to accept the Caliphate.
  He might have been genuine in this offer and might have truly wished to see Imam Sadiq (A.S) be the Caliph.

  However, he overestimated his strength and underestimate the treachery and evilness of Saffah and Mansoor. Hardly did he guess that Saffah, Mansoor and Abu Muslim, who outwardly treated him with honor and respect, were behind his back, planning to kill him. Tabari records vividly the plot that was being hatched to kill Abu Salma. Saffah wrote secretly to Abu Muslim of his fears pertaining to Abu Salma ind instructed him to get rid of Abu Salma. Saffah invited Abu Salma to his palace and kept him occupied till late at night and then let him go. On his way home, Abu Salma was attacked by Abu Mulsim's hit-man and killed. The depth of Abu Salma was then blamed on the Khwarjees.

Imagine what would have been the position of Imam sadiq (A.S) had he accepted Caliphate on the strength of the word to Abu Salma.

- **Abu Muslim:**

  Both Saffah and Mansoor knew that without the military help of Abu Salma and Abu Muslim, they could not end the Uminayade ruler ship. They also knew that so far as Abu Salma and Abu Muslim lived, there could not be complete freedom for the

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Abbaside Caliphs, to rule as they wished. The Abbaside brothers therefore had their own hidden agenda: First to use both Abu Salma's and Abu Muslim's services to remove the Ummayade dynasty, then through craft and treachery to remove from the scene both Abu Salma and Abu Muslim.

Abu Salma, as we have already seen, was the first one to go. Abu Muslim's life was spread up to the moment when he finally defeated Marwan al-Hammer at the Battle of the Zab in 132 AH. With the final collapse of the Ummayade rulership and the murder of Marwan, Saffah and Mansoor turned their eyes on Abu iVtulsim. Before Saffah could act against Abu Muslim, he died in 136 AH. Mansoor took over the Caliphate arid his first action was to prepare to kill Abu Muslim.

In 132 AH, Abu Mulsirn had just put down the rebellion at Nasibin, Syria and was heading back to his station at Khorasan (Merv). Mansoor requested him to pay him a visut at his court in Baghdad to advise him on important maters of state. Flattered by such royal gesture, Abu Muslim visited Mansoor. Mansoor got Abu Muslim arrested and killed in his very presence. His body was then dumped into the River Euphrates.

Thus ended the life of one who was key to the demise of the Ummayade dynasty and the rise of the Abbaside Kingship.

- Abu Jaffer (Mansoor) therefore came out to be the real beneficiary of the revolution whose successful initiation and completion was the work of many adventurous people, most important of whom were Zaid, Muhammad Nafs-U-Zakiya, Abu Salma, Abu Muslim all of whom benefited but little form their efforts.

However, even for Mansoor, the success was but limited. To come to power and remain at the helm of power, he had to commit so many atrocious acts and to spill the blood of so many innocent

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people. Admittedly, by his efforts the Abbaside dynasty was brought to power and continued to flourish through repression; it finally came to an end in 656 AH. As a matter of fact, the end of the Abbasi dynasty, by the account of some historian, had ended earlier; in the words of Hamza Isfahani the Abbaside rulcrship ended in 921 A.D(636 A.H)in the 13th year of the reign of Mustansir. Robert Payne comments "for more than two hundred years the pages of history were to be littered with the twitching fragments of its course."

In light of the negative consequences for all those who went for the political opportunity vis-a-vis seizing the Caliphate, we can appreciate the wisdom behind Imam Sadiq's rejection of this option, and his determination to build his strategy for change on the shoulders of the education option that we have seen in chapter 2.

Conclusion:

During the times of Imam Jaffer Sadiq (A.S), the political situation was such that the Muslim masses were no longer ready to accept the cruel rulership of the Ummayades. They had seen the virtuous lives of the Imams from the household of the Prophet (S.A.W.W) and were prepared to return them to power. Unfortunately, there were some people who looked at this situation differently. Their intention was to overthrow the Ummayades and seize power for themselves. The mastermind behind tin s movement was Muhammad Bin AJi Abbasi and his three sons: fbrahim, Abu Abbas (Saffah) and Abu Jaffer (Mansoor).

Imam Sadiq (A.S) saw this plot clearly and therefore took a very different approach. Being the representative of Allah on this earth, he could not and did not want to engage himself in acts of treachery, cruelty and duplicity, which were the keys to obtain and ep the Caliphate. If he truly wanted to stay in power he would be required to stoop as low as did Saffah and Mansoor. Even then the

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Imam (A.S.) knew that the benefits of such evil acts were short lived.

Imam Sadiq (A.S.) therefore chose another opportunity that was hidden behind the fall and decline of the Ummayades on the one hand and the rise of the Abbasides on the other hand.

During this period of political turmoil, Imam (A.S.) invested his time and energy in the establishment of an educational institution of a magnitude that none had seen before and through it to propagate the true massage of Islam that had hitherto remained in obscurity.

The best that the Abbasides got was a rulership of about 600 years; that was at its peak during the times of Mansoor, Haroon and Mamoon and ended pitifully in with the sacking of Baghdad by Hulagu in 1258 A.D.

On the other hand, Imam Sadiq's approach strengthened the religion of Allah and opened up venues of knowledge and learning that continue to benefit humanity in general and Muslims in particular till this day.

Such was the wisdom of Imam Jaffer Sadiq (A.S.)

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CHAPTER 5

IMAM JAFFER BIN MUHAMMED AL-SADIQ (A.S.) CHARACTER AND PERSONALITY

INTRODUCTION:

For reasons that have already been outlined in the preceding chapters, like his father, Imam Sadiq (A.S.) had an opportunity of serving humanly in general and Muslims in particular for a long time without restrictions. Consequently, his great merits as a teacher, scholar and genius came to be appreciated wide and apart throughout the known world of the times in which he lived.

Accompanied with his versatile knowledge in humanities, physical and religious sciences, was his impeccable character. His personality was a fine mixture of piety, generosity steadfastness, courage and above all, sensitivity towards the needs and expectations of his fellow humans. Whoever came in contact with him was left with awe for him. His charisma, care for others and concern to improve the life of the creatures of Allah was such that he impacted the lives of many. This can be seen by the tributes that Muslim scholars of all denomination in different ages came to make for him.

Shahrastani, the famous Sunni writer, praised Imam Sadiq (A.S.) in these words: “His knowledge was great in religion and culture; he was fully informed in philosophy; he attained great piety in the world' and he abstained entirely form lusts. He lived in Medina long enough to greatly profit the sect that followed him, and to give his friends the advantage of the hidden sciences. For he who is drowned in the sea of knowledge does not covet anything...,"

Ibne Hajar, the author of SAWAEQA **AL MUHRIKA** complements Imam Sadiq (A.S) saying that he was the best person

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of his times and for that he was his father's successor. Ibn Khalkan praised the Imam (A.S), saying his greatness and his accomplishments deserve description. Imam Fakhruddin Radhi (In his *TafsirKabir]* and Shah Abdul Aziz Dehlavi (in his *Tohfa Ithenasherid)* consider Imam Sadiq as "MASOOM: (the infallible).

A brief analysis of the character traits of the Imam (A.S) will give us an indication as to why scholars of Islam complemented him in the most praiseworthy terms.

Piety:

He spent his days fasting and his nights in prayers and recommended his followers to engage in such acts of piety. All along, he tried to explain to his followers that whereas rituals were an important part of piety, but they remained incomplete if not backed by practical demonstration in day to day activities. We shall see more of this when we consider the advice that he used to give to those who were with him.

Generosity:

He believed in sharing with others whatever he had in the form of knowledge and wealth. We have already seen how he shared his knowledge with others; here we shall give illustrations to show how he shared with others whatever wealth that he had.

His house was always open for the needy. He would never sit to have his meals alone; there had to be guests with him at the times of meals. Imam (A.S) used to say that in his view to sit and share meals with a believer was more virtuous than freeing a slave. Abu Hamza Thimali describes one such occasion when he was present. Delicious food was served, then fresh and sweet dates were distributed. One of the guests commented that for partaking such types of rich foods, the participants would have to answer on the Day of Judgement in accordance with verse of the Quran [cc]the day in which accounts will be required from those who benefited from bounties". Imam (A.S) replied that it is beyond the greatness

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of Allah that he should question his creation on the food that he made available to them. Rather on the Day of Judgement people will be required to account for their behavior towards the "Ahlul Bayt."

- Imam (A.S) was with his guests having meals when one of them made a move to stand up to go get something for himself The Imam (A.S) stopped him and went to serve the guest, saying that it was his duty as a host to serve his guest and let him continue with his meals undisturbed; for this was the advice from the Prophet (S. A.W.W).
- It was the habit of the Imam (A.S) that in the darkness of the night he would cover his face so as not to be recognized, and would cany cooked food to serve the needy in their houses. The recipients of these benefits came to know who their beneficence was only after the martyrdom of the Imam (A.S).

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